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MEMORANDUM

TO: Parents/Family Members, Advocates, Providers, DDSN Staff and Interested Parties

FROM: Beverly A. H. Buscemi, Ph.D.
State Director

RE: FY 2011-2012 Services Spending Plan

DATE: August 25, 2011

On August 17 and 18, 2011, the SC Commission on Disabilities and Special Needs met to identify needs, discuss issues and plan services for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. At their meeting on August 18, the Commission unanimously adopted a spending plan for the provision of services to all disability groups served by the agency. This plan has lots of good news!

First, the agency has sufficient resources to maintain service levels equal to last year's levels. The needs of the most vulnerable people will be met. We anticipate that slightly more than 200 individuals will be in critical situations this year, where their health and safety are significantly jeopardized. Resources are assigned to meet these individual critical needs as they arise during the year.

Second, effective immediately, the freeze on services is lifted. Previously, if someone left a service, another person could not begin receiving that service unless they met critical status criteria. Now resources resulting from natural attrition can be used to serve people who are waiting for services. We anticipate being able to provide a wide array of in-home supports to over 350 individuals on waiting lists this year as a result of removing the freeze.

Third, at least 225 individuals will begin receiving day services and some in-home supports this year as a result of a special initiative started last year to maximize funds appropriated to the agency. These individuals will move off the Community Supports Waiver waiting list. The Commission also allocated new funds to move 50 to 75 people off the Intellectual Disabilities/Related Disabilities, Head and Spinal Cord Injury and Community Supports Waiver waiting lists. One-time funding is available to continue the new Caregiver Relief Program and hopefully expand it to other counties. Employment services will be offered to approximately 25 new individuals. In addition, Post-Acute Rehabilitation services will be available to serve an additional 8 to 10 individuals who sustain a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury during the year. This is above the 25 to 30 people we have been able to serve in past years. In the Pervasive Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Program we anticipate about 250 new children to be served through attrition and growth of the program.

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There are many one-time capital and infrastructure needs across our system. While all of them cannot be addressed at this time, DDSN will be able to take care of its facilities at the Regional Centers and in the community necessary to ensure the health, safety and well being of consumers. The Commission also approved one-time funding for our community providers. They have been stretched extremely thin and need whatever relief can be afforded.

DDSN is making every effort to use all of its available resources wisely – to meet the needs of individuals living in critical circumstances, to move waiting lists, to boost one-time services and to aid our providers.

While the prospect of serving new people is exciting, we have a great deal of work to do! As a parent, a family member or individual in need of services, you want services now. The Commission and DDSN staff completely understand that we cannot act fast enough to please everyone. I ask for your patience. We are committed to doing our very best in a thoughtful manner that is fair to everyone.

It is important for each of us to remember that all of these services are possible because of the generosity shown to DDSN through the state budget process. Services for people with disabilities were again a priority of the state and legislators strongly supported us. Funding was appropriated by the General Assembly and approved by Governor Haley to ensure last year's service funding levels continued this year. Further, they allowed DDSN to retain and use one-time funds to meet as many needs as possible. Legislative leaders like Chairman Hugh Leatherman, Senator Thomas Alexander, (former) Chairman Dan Cooper and (new) Chairman Brian White were our champions through the budget process. Last week, the Commission took their responsibility very seriously knowing that the needs were greater than the resources available to accomplish everything. They did an excellent job of addressing many different areas of service needs and intentionally ensured every disability group benefited.

Please take time to thank your local legislators, the legislative leaders who helped us, Governor Haley and the members of the Commission for their hard work and leadership. Their efforts are essential to our success. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you as advocates and providers for your help and important role as partners. The result of people working together last year is that this year more individuals with disabilities will directly benefit from new services. Moving forward together, we will make more progress!

CC: Commission Members